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## OXFORD DEMOCRAT,

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EXECUTED WITH NEATNESS AND DESPATCH.

## POETRY.

### VERSES TO A LOCOMOTIVE.

Mighty image of a thought  
Which the mind of Watt gave birth,  
But which later hands have wrought  
Into forms of passing worth;  
More than all the wealth that sleeps  
In the unrequited deep—  
Thou the jewelled crowns of kings—  
Richest ores of Indian mines—  
These are weak and futile things,  
Measured by the light that shines  
Round thy well accustomed path,  
Form of majesty and wrath.  
Wonder gazes with mute lips,  
Seeing all, yet waits to see;  
Deep in speculation dips,  
But never solves the mystery,  
What hath made thee, what thou art,  
Spirit of the fiery heart.

Here the handwork of man  
Reaches to the Master's skill,  
In its perfection of plan,  
In its energy of will;  
Holding in directed course,  
Highest elements of force.

Miracle of human art,  
Now mark thy smoky train,  
As the pointed lightning starts,  
Stream along the iron path:  
Words of ancient prophecy  
Thru into my memory.

Men by inspiration taught,  
Reaching with an eye sublime,  
In high presence of thought,  
To the outer gates of time,  
Saw thy dazzling meteor light  
Gleam across the future's night.

Saw the lofty hills descend  
To the level plains beneath,  
And the mighty forests bend  
In mute terror at thy breath:  
Shooting through the storm and gloom,  
Like a herald star of doom.

Who shall solve the mystery—  
Read the prophecy aright—  
What the ripened fruit shall be,  
Of this element of might?  
Which all time and space divides,  
Spanning the earth's rounded sides.

To the human brotherhood,  
If gift were used well:  
It would fight with greater good  
Than the power of the years,  
When the son of man appears.

When the reign of war shall cease,  
And all strife in human hearts,  
When the dawn of love and peace,  
And the glory of the arts,  
And this festival of our God,  
Be the earth which Adam trod.

**MEXICAN SLAVERY.** The Matamoros flag, a paper conducted in the English language by Americans at Matamoros, gives a very interesting view of affairs in that city. It may not be known to some of our readers that a large portion of the Mexican population are bondsmen, *yes* slaves. Such is the case. The Mexican landholder, like the Russian, holds the serfs on his land, who cannot leave it without permission from the alcalde of the town. If the laborer in any way becomes indebted to his master, it is utterly impossible for him to get out of debt. The master hires out the services of his debtor, and allows him, perhaps \$3 or \$4 a month, as the full value of his work. If he becomes sick, the master charges him with loss of time, medical attendance, &c., so when the bondsmen die he is in debt, and the debt is forthwith transferred to his offspring, who lead out the life of their parents, whose offspring in the same manner remain in bondage. Since the settlement of American troops in Matamoros, the value of Mexican labor has been greatly enhanced, and the result is, that great numbers of these "hereditary bondsmen" have purchased their freedom. Once free they show their former masters, and resort to where they can get the best pay for their labor. Many of the wealthy Mexicans, who have never known what work is, are obliged to do their own domestic labor. It appears to us that if this example of the change in the condition of the Matamoros bondsmen could be disseminated thro' the Mexican towns, an unquenchable spirit would be engendered among this unfortunate class which constitute so large a portion of the Mexican population. The result would be highly favorable to us and disastrous to our enemies.

The best mode of promoting a nation's welfare, is to improve its morals, encourage industry, and diffuse education. This is the true American system, and we want no other.

It was a golden saying of Dr. Franklin, in answer to one of the impudent letters of Thomas Paine, that "if men were so wicked with religion, what would they do without it?"

A man's own good breeding is the best security against other people's ill manners.

## THE STORY TELLER.

From the Philadelphia Saturday Courier.

### LEGENDS OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY GEORGE LIPPARD.

#### VALLEY FORGE.

Hidden away there in a deep glen, not many miles from Valley Forge, a quaint old farm house rose darkly over a wide waste of snow.

It was a cold dark winter night, and the snow began to fall—when from the broad fireplace of the old farm house, the cheerful blaze of massive logs flashed around a wide and spacious room.

Two persons sat there by that fire, a father and child. The father, who sits yonder, with a soldier's belt thrown over his farmer's dress, is a man of some fifty years, his eyes bloodshot, his hair changed to an untimely grey, his face wrinkled and hollowed by care, and by dissipation more than care.

And the daughter who sits in the full light of the blaze opposite her father—a slenderly formed girl of some seventeen years, clad in a coarse lincey skirt and kerchief, which made up the costume of a farmer's daughter, in the days of the Revolution.

She is not beautiful—ah, no! Care—perhaps that disease, consumption, which makes the heart grow cold to name—has been busy with that young face, sharpened its outlines, and stamped it with a deadly paleness.

There is no bloom on that young cheek. The brown hair is laid plainly aside from the pale brow. Then tell me, what is it you see, when you gaze in her face?

You look at that young girl, you see nothing but the gleam of two large dark eyes, that burn into your soul.

Yes, those eyes are unnaturally large and dark and bright—perhaps consumption is leading their flame.

And now as the father sits there, so moody and sullen, as the daughter sits yonder, so sad and silent and pale, tell me, I pray you the story of their lives.

That farmer, Jacob Manheim, was a peaceful, a happy man before the Revolution. Since the war, he had become drunken and idle—driven his wife broken-hearted to the grave—and worse than all, joined a band of Tory refugees, who scour the land at dead of night, burning and murdering as they go.

To-night, at the hour of two, this Tory band will lie in wait, in a neighboring pass, to attack and murder the "Rebel" Washington, whose starving soldiers are yonder in the huts of Valley Forge.

Washington on his lonely journeys is wont to pass this farm house—the cut-throats are there in the next chamber, drinking and feasting, as they wait for two o'clock at night.

And the daughter, Mary, for her name was Mary; they loved that name in the good old times—what is the story of her brief young life? She had been reared by her mother, now dead and gone home, to revere the name Washington, who to-night will be attacked and murdered—to revere him next to God. Nay, more: that mother on her death-bed joined the hands of this daughter, in solemn betrothal with the hands of a young partisan leader, Harry Williams, who now shares the crust and the cold of Valley Forge.

Well may that maiden's eye flash with unnatural brightness, well may her pale face gather a single burning flush, in the centre of each cheek!

For yesterday afternoon, she went four miles, over roads of ice and snow, to tell Captain Williams the plot of the refugees. She did not reach Valley Forge until Washington had left on one of his lonely journeys; so this night, at twelve, the partisan captain will occupy the rocks above the neighboring pass, to "trap the trappers of George Washington."

Yes, that pale slender girl, remembering the words of her dying mother, had broken through her obedience to her father, after a long and bitter struggle. How dark that struggle in a faithful daughter's heart! She had betrayed her plots to his enemies—stipulating first for the life, the safety of her traitor-father.

And now as father and child are sitting there, as the shouts of the Tory refugees echo from the next chamber—as the hand of the old clock is on the hour of eleven—hark! There is the sound of horses' hoofs without the farm house—there is a pause—the doors opens—a tall stranger, wrapped in a thick cloak, white with snow, enters, advances to the fire, and in brief words solicits some refreshment and an hour's repose.

Why does the Tory Manheim start aguish at the sight of that stranger's blue and gold uniform—then mumbling something to his daughter about "getting food for the traveller," rush wildly into the next room, where his brother Tories are feasting?

Tell me, why does that young girl stand trembling before the tall stranger, veiling her eyes from that calm face, with his blue eyes and kindly smile?

Ah—if we may believe the legends of that time, few men, few warriors, who dared the terror of battle with a smile, could stand unabashed before the solemn presence of Washington.

For it was Washington, exhausted with a long journey—his limbs stiffened and his face numbed with cold—it was the great "Rebel" of Valley Forge, who returning to camp sooner than his usual hour, was forced by the storm to take refuge in the farmer's house and claim a little food and an hour's repose at his hands.

In a few moments, behold the Soldier, with his cloak thrown off, sitting at that oaken table, partaking of the food, spread out there by the

hands of the girl, who now stands trembling at his shoulder.

And look! Her hand is extended as if to grasp him by the arm—her lips move as if to warn him of his danger, but make no sound. Why all this silent agony for the man who sits so calmly there?

One moment ago, as the girl, in preparing the hasty supper, opened yonder closet door, adjoining the next room, she heard the low whispers of her father and the Tories; she heard the dice box rattle, as they were casting lots, who should stab George Washington in his sleep!

And now, the words: "Beware, or this night you die!" trembles half-formed upon her lips, when the father comes hastily from that room and hushes her with a look.

"Show the gentleman to his chamber, Mary!" (how calmly polite a murderer can be!)—"that chamber at the head of the stairs, on the left—On the left, you mind!"

Mary takes the light, trembling and pale. She leads the soldier up the oaken stairs. They stand on the landing, in this wing of the farm-house, composed of two rooms, divided by thick walls from the main body of the mansion. On one side, the right is the door of Mary's chamber; on the other, the left, the chamber of the soldier—to him a chamber of death.

For a moment, Mary stands there trembling and confused. Washington gazes upon that pale girl with a look of surprise. Look! She is about to warn him of his danger, when, see there!—her father's rough face appears above the head of the stairs.

"Mary show the gentleman into the chamber on the left. And look ye, girl—it's late—you'd better go into your own room and go to sleep." While the Tory watches them from the head of the stairs, Washington enters the chamber on the left, Mary the chamber on the right.

An hour passes. Still the storm beats on the roof—still the snow drifts on the hills. Before the fire, in the dim old hall of that farm house, are seven half-drunken men, with the tall Tory, Jacob Manheim, setting in their midst; the murderer's knife in his hand. For the lot had fallen upon him. He is to go up stairs and stab the sleeping man.

Even the half-drunken murderer is pale at the thought—how the knife trembles in his hand—trembles against the pistol barrel. The jeers of his comrades rouse him to the work—the light in one hand, the knife in the other, he goes up the stairs—he listens! first at the door of his daughter's chamber on the right, then at the door of the soldier's chamber on the left. All is still. Then he places the light on the floor—he enters the chamber on the left—he is gone a moment—silence!—there is a faint groan! He comes forth again, rushes down the stairs, and stands there before the fire, with the bloody knife in his hand.

"Look!" he shrieks, as he scatters the red drops over his comrades' faces, over the hearth into the fire—"Look! it is his blood—the traitor Washington!"

His comrades gather round him with yells of joy; already, in fancy, they count the gold which will be paid for this deed, when lo! that stair door opens, and there, without a wound, even the stain of a drop of blood, stands George Washington, asking calmly for his horse.

"What!" shrieked the Tory Manheim, "can neither steel nor bullet harm you? Are you a living man? Is there no wound about your heart? no blood upon your uniform?"

That apparition drives him mad. He starts forward—he places his hands tremblingly upon the arms, upon the breast of Washington! Still no wound. Then he looks at the bloody knife still clutched in his right hand, and stands there quivering as with a death spasm.

While Washington looks on in silent wonder, the door is flung open, the bold troopers from Valley Forge throng the room, with the gallant form and brazen visage of Captain Williams in their midst. At this moment the clock struck twelve. Then a horrid thought crashes like a thunder-bolt upon the brain of the Tory Manheim. He seizes the light—rushes into the room of his daughter on the right. Some one had just risen from the bed, but the chamber was vacant. Then towards that room on the left, with steps of leaden heaviness—Look! how the light quivers in his hand! He pauses at the door; he listens! Not a sound—a stillness like the grave. His blood curdles in his veins! Gathering courage, he pushes open the door. He enters. Towards that bed through whose curtains he struck so blindly a moment ago! Again he pauses—not a sound—a stillness more terrible than the grave. He flings aside the curtains.

There, in the full light of the lamp, her young form but half covered, bashed in her own blood there lay his daughter, Mary!

Ah, do not look upon the face of the father, as he starts silently back, frozen to stone; but in this pause of horror listen to the mystery of this deed!

After her father had gone down stairs, an hour ago, Mary silently stole from the chamber on the right. Her soul shaken by a thousand fears, she opened the door on the left, and beheld Washington sitting by a table on which were spread a chart and a Bible. Then, though her existence was wound up in the act, she asked him, in a tone of calm politeness to take the chamber on the opposite side. Mary entered the chamber which he left.

Can you imagine the agony of that girl's soul as lying on the bed intended for the death-conch of Washington, she silently advanced the knife, although that knife might be clenched in a father's hand.

And now that father, frozen to stone, stood

there, holding the light in one hand, and other still clutching the red knife.

There lay his child, the blood streaming from that wound in her arm—her eyes covered with a glassy film.

"Mary!" shrieked the guilty father—for robber and Tory as he was he was still a father—"Mary!" he called to her, but that word was all he could say.

Suddenly, she seemed to wake from that stupor. She sat up in the bed with her glassy eyes. The strong hand of death was upon her. As she sat there erect and ghastly, the room was thronged with soldiers. Her lover rushed forward, and called her by name. No answer. Called again—spoke to her in the familiar tones of olden time—still no answer. She knew him not.

Yes, it was true—the strong hand of death was upon her.

"Has he escaped?" she said, in that husky voice.

"Yes!" shrieked the father. "Live, Mary, only live, and to-morrow I will join the camp at Valley Forge."

Then that girl—that Hero-woman—dying as she was, not so much from the wound in her arm as from the deep agony which had broken the last chord of life, spread forth her arms, as though she beheld a form floating there above her bed, beckoning her away. She spread forth her arms as if to enclose that Angel form.

"Mother!" she whispered—while there grouped the soldiers—there, with a speechless agony on his brow, stood the lover—there, hiding his face with one hand, while the other grasped the light, crouched the father—that light flashing over the dark bed, with the white form in its centre—"Mother, thank God! For with my life I have saved him!"

Look, even as starting up on that bloody couch, she speaks the half-formed word, her arms stiffen, her eyes wide open, set in death, glare in her father's face!

She is dead! From that dark room her spirit has gone home!

That half-formed word, still quivering on the white lips of the Hero-woman—that word uttered in a husky whisper, choked by the death-rattle—that word was—"WASHINGTON!"

## HOW TO SPELL CAT.

Some time during the last war with Great Britain, says a contemporary, the — Regiment of Infantry, was stationed near Boston. Old Dr. M. (peace to his ashes) was surgeon to the Regiment. The Doctor was an old gentleman of very precise and formal manners, who stood a great deal upon his dignity of deportment, and was, in his own estimation, one of the literati of the Army. Nevertheless he was fond of a joke—provided always, it was not perpetrated at his own expense.

It is well known, in the "old school," that at the commencement of the war, a number of citizens were appointed officers in the Army, who were more noted for their chivalry than for the correctness of their orthography. The Doctor took little pains to conceal his contempt for the "new set."

One day, at mess, after the decanter had performed sundry preambulations of the table, Capt. S., a brave and accomplished officer, and a great wag, remarked to the Doctor—who had been some-what severe in his remarks on the literary deficiencies of some of the new officers:

"Doctor M., are you acquainted with Captain G.?"

"Yes, I know him well," replied the Doctor.

"He one of the new set—but what of him?"

"Nothing in particular," replied Capt. S.

"I have just received a letter from him, and I will wager you a dozen of old Port that you cannot guess in six guesses how he spells Cat."

"Done," said the Doctor, "it's a wager."

"Well—commence guessing," said S.

"K-a-double t."

"No."

"K-a-t-e."

"No—try again."

"K-a-t-a."

"No—you have missed it again."

"Well, then," resumed the Doctor, "C-a-double t."

"No, that's not the way—try again—it's your last guess."

"C-a-g-h-t."

"No," said S., "that's not the way—you have lost the wager."

"Well," said the Doctor, with much petulance of manner, "how the d—l does he spell it?"

"Why he spells it C-a-t," replied S., with the utmost gravity.

Amid the roar of the mess, and almost choking with rage, the Doctor sprang to his feet, exclaiming:

"Capt. S., I am too old a man to be trifled with in this manner."

"Come here, my lad," said an attorney to a boy about nine years of age. The boy came, and asked the attorney "what case was to be tried next?"

The lawyer answered, "a case between the Pope and the Devil—which do you think will gain the action?"

The boy replied, "I guess it will be a pretty tight squeeze—the Pope has the most money, but the Devil has the most lawyers."

A young apprentice to the shoemaking business asked his master what answer he should give to the oft-repeated question, "Does your master warrant his shoes?"

"Answer, Thomas," said the master, "that I warrant them to prove good, and if they don't, I'll make them good-for-nothing."

## A GLASS EYE.

A singular case is reported in Gallinani's Messenger, as having recently come off before a Justice of the Peace at Neuilly, France. Dame Playette has a little dog of the gentlest kind, and which she loves as women generally love an animal, when obliged to renounce all hopes of a nether kind of attachment. Some months since, Mme. Playette holding a lump of sugar between her lips, tempted the dog with it, in withdrawing her head at the moment the animal would seize it. This play lasted for some minutes, when the dog gave a leap to snap the coveted article; but unfortunately, his claws, sharp as a cat's struck the right eye of his mistress, who uttered a shriek and fell back in a swoon. On coming to, she found that she had lost an eye.

Although having attained a half century, Mme. Playette would not consent to remain with the absent eye, but submitted to a painful operation in having a glass one adjusted, which, aside from any motion, perfectly resembled the other. But when the artist, who had manufactured the false eye demanded the 100 francs agreed upon Mme. Playette refused to cash up, and he therefore resorted to a Court of Justice.

M. Tamissier, the plaintiff, is represented by his attorney. Mme. Playette enters the Court, holding her glass eye in her hand.

Justice—You are aware, Madame, of the nature of the suit instituted against you by M. Tamissier. Why do you refuse to pay the sum stipulated between you?

Mme. P.—M. Tamissier doubtless thought because I was only a woman, he should catch me, but I will prove to him that the widow of a battalion commander is not a boarding-school Miss.

J.—All this rigmorole is foreign to the case, and I must confine you.

Mme. P.—(Indignantly)—Confine me! confine me! Do you take me for a fool, Monsieur?

J.—(smiling)—Allow me to finish. I must confine you to the facts in the case.

Mme. P.—The facts in the case are, that that wretched botch has charged me with an eye with which nobody could see a bull three feet distant. I did not order an eye to play blind man's buff with!

J.—How! did you presume to suppose you could see with that eye?

Mme. P.—To ask me that—Do me the pleasure to tell me what one has eyes for—if not to see with?

J.—Truly, Madame, what you offer is passing strange. Reflect a little—how could you expect to see with a false eye?

Mme. P.—I want to see with both eyes as well as other people! I ordered an eye to see clear—and I want to see clear with it. Till then I won't pay a farthing. (Prolonged laughter in the audience.)

Mme. Playette turns towards the spectators, and exclaims:—What are those boobies laughing at? I have a top-piece and it serves me like the rest of my hair. I have three false teeth which do the office of those that preceded them. Why, then, should it not be the same with my eye? (Redoubled laughter.)

When order was restored, the Justice declared the case terminated, and condemned Madame Playette to pay the 100 francs and cost of court.

Mme. Playette then retired, rudely throwing her false eye upon the pavement and breaking it into fragments.

**A CHALLENGE REPELLED.** After the battle of Preston Plains, a witty Scotch farmer amused himself by writing a ballad upon it, which so stung one of the English officers, who had behaved very basely on the occasion, that he sent the poet a challenge to meet him at H—, for mortal combat. The second found the farmer busy with his hay fork, to whom he delivered the challenge of the redoubtable hero. The good humored farmer, turning towards him with the agricultural implement, coolly said, "Gang awa back to Mester Smith, and tell him I have na time to come to H— to gi' him satisfaction, but that if he likes to come here, I'll do just as he did—I'll run awa'."

**THE ART OF RAISING.** The Duke of Grammont was the most adroit and witty courtier of his day. He entered one day the closet of Cardinal Mazarin without being announced. His evidence was amusing himself, jumping close-legged against the wall. To surprise a prime minister in so boyish an occupation, was dangerous, and a less skilful courtier might have stammered excuses and retired. The Duke entered briskly, and cried, "I'll bet you a hundred crowns that I jump higher than your eminence;" and the Duke and the Cardinal began to jump for their lives. Grammont took good care to jump a few inches lower than the Cardinal; and was six months afterwards, a Marshall of France.

**HORSE TO LET.** "This tenement to let, enquire next door." The place was in a wretched state of dilapidation: but Bamester enquire the rent, &c. These particulars gained, he asked: "Do you let anything with it?" "No," was the reply, "why do you ask that?" "Because, if you let it alone, it will tumble down."

**PROGRESS OF THE YANKEES.** The most fashionable boarding house in Rome is kept by Mrs. Clark, an American lady.

The line of omnibuses across the Isthmus of Suez is owned by a Yankee, and all his drivers are Cape Cod boys.

A lad was killed in St. Louis, by a fall of snow from a house.











